

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**REPORT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

10 JUNE 2014

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – LEGAL & REGULATORY
SERVICES**

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2014-15

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 To present the Committee with suggested topics for consideration in the development of its Forward Work Programme for 2014-15.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The key improvement objectives identified in the Corporate Plan 2013-2017 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The amended Corporate Improvement Objectives adopted by Council on 3 April 2013 formally set out the improvement objectives that the Council will seek to implement between 2013 and 2017. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees engage in review and development of plans, policy or strategies that support the Corporate Themes.

3. Background.

- 3.1 Under the terms of Bridgend County Borough Council's Constitution, each Overview and Scrutiny Committee must publish a Forward Work Programme (FWP) as far as it is known. Forward Work Programmes of Overview and Scrutiny Committees are designed to be flexible, and the Committee may decide to amend or alter it throughout the year. This Forward Work Programme period runs from May 2014 – May 2015.

4. Current situation / proposal.

- 4.1 An effective Forward Work Programme will identify the issues that the Committee wishes to focus on during the year and provide a clear rationale as to why particular issues have been selected, as well as the approach that will be adopted; i.e. will the Committee be undertaking a policy review/ development role ("Overview") or performance management approach ("Scrutiny")? Will the work be undertaken by the whole Committee or through a smaller Research and Evaluation Panel?
- 4.2 Work programming should be a continuous process, as it is important that the Committee does not commit itself to a piece of work that becomes less relevant as circumstances change throughout the year, or finds itself unable to respond to new issues that arise during the course of the year due to its existing commitments.

- 4.3 However, given the finite resources available to the local authority, it is sensible to set time aside at the beginning of the civic year in order to plan ahead and ensure that key issues are identified in good time.
- 4.4 During March and April, Scrutiny Officers developed a longlist of potential items for inclusion on the Forward Work Programme, using the criteria set out below, which emphasise the need to consider issues such as impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception when identifying topics for investigation.

Examples of Issues to Consider when Selecting Areas for Scrutiny:

Initial Reasons:

1. Is the subject within the Committee's terms of reference?
2. How can Members add value in their representative role?
3. Is the subject being/been/due to be dealt with elsewhere in the Authority/partner agencies?
4. What would be the purpose of conducting a review of this area?
5. To what extent does the subject impact upon the Council's ability to achieve its key priorities?

Risk:

6. Is the subject a high-risk area? How does it relate to the Authority's risk management framework?

Performance Measures:

7. Has the Council demonstrated poor performance in this area?
8. To what extent is there scope to improve service delivery in this area?

Community Perception:

9. Has any consultation with stakeholders taken place in this area? If so, how robust was the consultation process?
10. Does the local community rank the subject as important?
11. How does the subject impact upon the Council's Community Leadership role?
12. Is the subject of public interest highlighted in the local media?

External Factors:

13. Has the matter been the subject of external/internal review or inspection? If so, what were the findings of the review?
14. Is there any recent/upcoming legislation that will affect the Council's approach to this subject?
15. Is the subject a Local Service Board priority?

Budget:

16. Is there a high level of budgetary commitment to the subject? Is there a pattern of budgetary overspends?

4.5 Officers also used the following sources in order to select items for inclusion on the long list:

- *Committee Requests for Scrutiny from previous Forward Work Programmes;*
- *Wales Audit Office Assessment Letters (August and November 2013)*
- *Corporate Risk Assessment*
- *Directorate Business Plans;*
- *Performance Reports to Scrutiny Committees;*
- *Annual business planning and budget setting process;*
- *Commission of Public Service Governance and Delivery (the Williams Report)*

4.6 Following the development of the longlist, Scrutiny Chairs and officers took part in a work planning exercise in order to develop a shortlist of items and provisionally allocate each item to a meeting date. The shortlist is set out in the following paragraphs.

4.7 Directorate Performance

Performance reports will be presented twice a year. In November/December, Members will receive the performance data from quarter 2 and in February/March the Committees will be provided with the performance data from quarter 3. The purpose of Members receiving these reports is to ensure Committees are able to provide a critical overview of Directorate performance based on timely and relevant financial and performance data. In addition to this, Members will also receive end of year performance data for quarter 4 for information purposes only.

4.8 Business Plans

Business plans are provided to the Committee annually in order to give Members the opportunity to scrutinise the Plans and for the comments to be reported to Cabinet as part of the ongoing business planning and budget process.

4.9 Corporate Plan

It has been proposed that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should have the opportunity to consider those priorities within the Corporate Plan that are relevant to their remit, in order to form a view on whether the priorities are the correct ones, and whether the actions being taken in order to deliver the priorities are effective.

Once each Scrutiny Committee has offered comments and recommendations, these are co-ordinated by the Community Safety and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee and sent to Cabinet to assist continuous improvement in this area.

4.10 Budget Setting Process

The Committee has an important role in considering the draft budget proposals as they relate to the Children's Directorate relating to the identification and implementation of savings, explanation for potential growth areas within the Directorate budget and proposals for funding any such growth areas. The Committee then has the responsibility to make its recommendations to the Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committee who combine the findings from all Scrutiny Committees and submit them in a report to Cabinet.

4.11 Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS)

This issue has links to Educational Attainment, which scores 16 on the corporate risk register. It is scheduled as an item on the agenda for the Committee meeting on 10 June.

4.12 Youth Offending Service

Following its meeting on 11 February 2013, the Committee has requested a report on the outcomes of research regarding patters relating to serious incidents involving young people known to the Youth Offending Service.

4.13 Youth Service Review

The Committee has previously requested a report in order to inform them of changes to the Youth Service in light of the savings requirements set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

4.14 Looked After Children Strategy

The Committee has been monitoring this during 2013-14 and has resolved this it would continue to monitor its progress and implementation. This links to issues around early intervention and prevention, which are priorities for the Directorate.

4.15 Looked After Children Budget Overspend

This has been raised as an issue by the Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of its budget monitoring role as the budget is consistently overspent. This issue links to early intervention and prevention strategies and their effectiveness as well as other performance issues within Safeguarding.

4.16 Social Services Workforce Plan

Due to ongoing issues with the recruitment and retention of experienced social workers, the Committee has requested that they see the Workforce Plan that is being developed. It is understood that the plan will address recruitment and retention issues, including an analysis of reasons given for leaving the employment of BCBC.

4.17 Early Intervention and Prevention

“Supporting vulnerable children, young people and their families” scores 16 on the corporate risk register. The risk register notes that failure to develop high quality early intervention and preventative services, including multi-agency locally based support, may lead to an increase in the number of children at risk/ Looked After. It may also lead to more complex and severe needs amongst children and young people and their families. It will also have an impact on the Safeguarding budget, which is consistently overspent. It is suggested that the Committee request a report on the current early intervention and prevention strategies in place and the impact they are having on numbers of children becoming looked after/ at risk.

4.18 Serious Case Reviews

The Committee received a report on this subject in July 2013. The Committee has asked to consider the subject again in greater depth, focusing on the processes regarding data capture and the protocols regarding sharing information between agencies. The report should also focus on the methods by which compliance with the agreed processes and protocols is ensured.

4.19 Regionalisation of the Safeguarding Children Board.

The Committee has previously requested a report on this issue and the potential impact on BCBC.

4.20 Statements of Special Educational Needs.

Due to the poor performance in this area, the Committee has suggested that the current policy/ model should be reviewed. It is suggested that the Committee request a report outlining the reasons for poor performance and the measures being undertaken to improve.

4.21 Annual School Performance Report 2013 – 14

Educational Attainment scores 16 on the corporate risk register. The School Performance report 2012 – 13 shows that on a number of indicators, BCBC is at or below the Welsh average. There are a smaller number of indicators which show BCBC at slightly above the Welsh Average. Estyn have graded the local authority as Adequate and have emphasized the need to increase Members’ knowledge of school data, amongst other recommendations. The Joint Education consortium is tasked with improving performance; however these arrangements are relatively recent and have been subject to change in order to fit in with the newly prescribed national model.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules.

5.1 The work of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental well being in the County Borough of Bridgend.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no equality impacts arising directly from this report.

7. Financial Implications.

7.1 The implementation of the Forward Work Programme will be met from within existing resources for Overview and Scrutiny support.

8. Recommendation.

8.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i. Consider the suggested topics for inclusion on the Committee's Forward Work Programme 2014-15
- ii. Determine if it wishes the Overview and Scrutiny Unit to undertake scoping exercises with regard to any additional topics that it wishes to be considered for inclusion on its Forward Work Programme.

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2014

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Background documents

Wales Audit Office Assessment Letters (August and November 2013)
Corporate Risk Assessment
Directorate Business Plans;
Commission of Public Service Governance and Delivery (the Williams Report)
Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committees May 2013 –May 2014